لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

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EDITOR

M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in 1835 at Qadian, a village in Indian. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of World Reformer to combat he false Religious Philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the flection of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call of their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his fore-fathers and bared like all mortals from coming back to the world, and that he had come instead as the Promised Messiah.

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The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the better, by means of His signs, to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to expound and disseminate sPiritual beauties and moral excellences of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences for their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good will and selfless fellow-service and a feeling of true brother-hood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Mauivi Noor-ud-Din as Khalifa-tul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Khalifa-tul Masih II. During his 52-year long leader-ship, the Khlifa-tul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named with one accord, Sahibzada Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Promised Messiah's grandson, Khalifa-tul Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to :

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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

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This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents true Islam. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems vital to the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles received by the Editor, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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The Quranic Concept of Revelation with reference to the Biblical Concepts.

(A Semantic Essay)

In the last ten days of June this year the Second Summer Conference was held at the Hartford Theological Seminary. Connecticut, U.S.A. from where the famous "Muslim World" Quarterly has been published for almost 70 years (founded by Dr. Zwemer). The theme of the Conference this year was "Revelation and Language", seen from a Christian, Jewish and Islamic point of view. Our brother Abdus Salaam Madsen of Denmark participated for the second time in the Conference and had the chance of delivering a lecture at the University on "The Qur'anic Concept of Revelation with reference to the Biblical concepts." The Conference was lead by the very able and always competent Dean of the University, Dr. Willem Bijlefeld, who is a great pioneer of Muslim-Christian Dialogue. From the Staff partcipated Dr. Issa Boullata, Dr. Wadi Haddad and Dr. Bodine. From outside we note among many others the presence of Dr.Fazl-ur-Rahman (University of Chiago), Dr. Zafar Ansari (Visiting Professor of McGill University, Montreal) and Dr. Herbert Jai Singh (Christian Retreat and Study Center, Rajpur, North India). We give below the paper delivered by Brother Abdus Salaam Madsen:

Introduction

The revelation from God and its conveyance to mankind is the theme of this Seminar: Word of God—Speech of Man.

What I intend to venture in the following paper is to render account of the basic Quranic ideas on revelation. 1. What is revelation? 2. Are there different kinds of revelation? 3. What are the criteria by which we mortals can judge revelation, distinguishing truth from deceit? 4. Is the revelation in human language identical with the Word of God, which is Eternal and Uncreated? 5. If not: how does the translation from Word of God to Speech of Man take place? Are we able to grasp this phenomenon or just to imagine some shadow of the reality behind it?

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Right from start I want to point out that we should not hope for final solutions—if we ever do that. Questions unanswered need not be irrelevant questions. They might give rise to other questions that were better formulated and therefore more apt to call forth better answers and on the whole push the development of our thought further on. This would—it is hoped—animate us to further co-operation for the benefit of mankind. Because many of us are convinced that only guidance from God can effectuate this. Insha Allah.

Before concluding this short introduction I have to admit that a change has occurred in my whole outlook while working on this paper. I had—and I am sure many of us have—the idea that there was a very sharp dividing line between the Christian and the Muslim view of revelation. Going back to the Scriptures with our theme in mind I found that we were much closer to each other than—at any rate I thought. Revelation from God is for a Christian the incarnation of God in Christ—that was revelation to our Christian brothers and sisters. Revelation from God is the word spoken by God through the angel of revelation to the servant and messenger chosen by God—that was a Muslim's concept of revelation. But if frontiers

and dividing lines do not agree with the Scriptural evidence—we must in all honesty fight against them not as real differences, but as so many barriers in the way of Truth.

So as consequence of my studies I have to attempt a semantic of revelation, trying my best to establish the meaning of terms—first of all in the Scripture I try to follow—the Quran-i-Karim—but also in (other) Biblical Scriptures which according to me as a Muslim contain evidence of earlier revelation.

A technical term of revelation: *wahy*

al-Raghib in his *Mufrdat* says that *wahy* is 'a hasty suggestion given to the mind'. If this is true, *wahy* ought to convey the idea of inspiration in its widest sense. That this kind of inspiration is part of God's revealtion I dare not deny. But linguistics is not a firm and unshakable basis of religious understanding. A modern Arab would say without any qualms of conscience: uhiya ilayya—in the meaning: it occurred to me-where-as the classical import of the statement would be: it was revealed to me.

So a closer examination of the application of the word in the Quran is a necessity.

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Wahy and its different derivations—as awha, awhayna, nuhi, yuhi etc. are used in 78 places in the Quran. In the majority of verses it is used about prophetic revelation, namely in 69 places,

At 9 places it is used otherwise:

16:68: revelation to the bee—probably in the sense of inspiring an instinct.

41:12; revealtion to the heavens—as inspiring the laws of nature.

99:5; to (or perhaps: regarding) the earth.

5:111; to the disciples of Jesus.

20 : 38 and 28 : 7 : to the mother of Moses.

The four last-mentioned verses prove that there could be revelation to non-prophets as well.

8 : 12 : inspiration to Angels

But according to the Quran inspiration can also have its origin in Satanic forces :

6 : 121 : Satans inspire their friends.

6 : 112 : Satans of Jinn and Men inspire each other to deceit.

In view of this we cannot affirm that *wahy* is a fully covering term for the word of God as revealed to Man.

A more frequent technical term *tanzeel*

Nazala and its many derivations, as anzala, nazilna, nuzila, yunazzila etc. are to be met with in Quranic verses as many as 293 times.

There seems to be two main connotations, derived either from *tanzeel* in the meaning of revelation, specifically in 15 verses. And secondly, derived from *nuzul* in the meaning of Divine gift, spcifically in 8 places.

But let us give a complete record of the relevant passages :

37 : 177 : punishment

34 : 2 : rain and 40 other places

6 : 111 : angels (of punishment) and 11 other verses

17 : 95 : refusal to send an angel as messenger

20 : 80 : of manna and quails

2 : 97 : and

16 : 102 : Gabriel sends down the Quran

4 : 153 : Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is asked to send down the Book from heaven

17 : 93 : the same

26 : 4 : sending of signs (miracles?)

15 : 21 : of all gifts or treasures

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5 : 112 : sending of Table
24 : 43 : hail
40 : 13 : and
42 : 27 : nourishment
2 : 105 : good
3 : 154 : sleep
9 : 26 : and
9 : 40 : *sakina* (security)
10 : 59 : food or nourishmemt
33 : 26 : bring to ruin (down from their fortresses)
39 : 6 : cattle
48 : 4 : and
48 : 18 : security
28 : 24 : good
2 : 57 : Manna and quails (also 7 : 160)
2 : 59 : punishment (Impurity)
7 : 26 : clothes
57 : 25 : iron
23 : 29 : cause to land on dry land (from the sea)
11 : 12 : treasure
26 : 221 : Satans descend on liars and sinners

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From this list of references we find that in 75 places it is derived from *nuzul* as something proceeding from God, for instance as a gift, but also that in more than 200 contexts the word is derived from the basic meaning of *tanzeel* in the meaning of revelation. So we are satisfied that *inzal* or *tanzeel* has a better right to be described as the technical term for revelation in the Quran. It is more aften than not used not in a literal sense of sending down from heaven, but in the sense of coming from the Exalted God, Who is far above limitations and shortcomings. The orthodox dogma of sending down the Book to the lowest heaven from which it is piecemeal revealed by the Archangel Gabriel to Muhammad (Peace and blessings be on him) must therefore be revised and understood in a figurative or metaphorical sense.

Word of God and Speech of Man?

The question now presents itself: is there in the terminology of the Quran a distinction between the adopted words which could justify the difference or otherwise of the Divine word and human speech?

We find in the Quran two main-terms covering the two meanings: *kalim* (and its derivatives *Kalaima, kalimaat*)—and from a different root we have *qawl*.

As for the word *kalaam*, it is used exclusively in the meaning of the word of God. It is found only in 4 places: 2:75, 7:144, 9:6, 48:15

As for *kalima*, it is applied in 38 verses with the clear significance: the word of God or the word of your Lord.

In 15 places it is possible to understand it in a different meaning, but only in 5 places it is clearly used in a special sense:

3:64: a word (testimony of faith) equal to both of us

9:40: and

9:74; testimany of disbelievers and of disbelief

18:5: and

23:100; word of disbelievers

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There are ten other contexts where the meaning is under dispute:

3:39: where John is said to confirm a word from Allah

(This may mean that he is fulfilling a prophecy—or that he is declaring his faith in the truthfulness of Jesus as the word from God)

3:45; where Mary receives glad tidings of a word from Him

(This can be understood in both senses again)

39:19; and

39:71; about the word of judgment

18:109 and

31;27; about the vastness of the words of Allah

(word of Allah might mean: a creation of Allah or: a revelation from Allah. It is extremely doubtful if it is really fruitful for a deeper understanding to make the distinction. According to Semitic way of expression the creative word includes the creation, cf. the word that creates what it mentions)

From this we conclude that *kalima* is almost always used about the word of God. If it is sometimes used in its "secular" meaning, this only corresponds to the fact that *rasul* (messenger) is also used in the secular sense in Sura Yousuf, where it simply means a messenger vide 12 : 50

Other words for speech and language

According to the Cairo Edition of Fluegel's Concordance (rearranged by Muhammad Fuad al Baqi) the term *Qawl* is found 85 times in the Quran and generally speaking it has been used about human speech. When rarely it is used about the word of God, it may be understood as the word (*kalima*) of God, conveyed to humans.

64 times it is clearly referring to the word of man

11—about the judgment

and only ten times about the word of God.

Here we want to point to the fact that the imperative *Qul* (say) of the same root is always used about a proclamation to men. In Fluegel the references to *Qul* cover nine columns. We regard this as a clear confirmation of our view that *Kalima* is the word of God—and *qawl* is a human word or the Divine word translated into human speech. Now the word "translation" must only be taken in a very weak meaning, not excluding the essential identity of the two words.

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The proper word for human language (or tongue) is of course *Lisaan*, which is found in 25 verses of the Book. It is evidently human speech, i.e. words which are spoken, articulated by the speech organs, most important among them the human tongue.

There are two verses of special interest here where the *lisaan* has been directly applied to the revelation recited by the Prophet:

16:103: this (revelation) is clear Arabic language (tongue)
26:195: in order that thou should became one of the warners in clear Arabic tongue

The *wahy* of God is revealed to the Messenger's heart (maybe: reasoning faculty) as *kalimaat* which he proclaims in *qawl* with *lisaan*. This is to us a preliminary solution of the problem of revelation, which we hope to elaborate later on.

Lugha is in modern Arabic the main word for language. It is very interesting to notice that in the Quran *algha* is used about making meaningless noise during the recitation of the Quran (41:36). Of the same root we have *laghw* which in ten verses is used in the meaning: vanity, vain, empty talk.

The root *nataq* is used in 23:62 and 45:29 about the Book with Allah that speaks the truth about or against men. There are furthermore ten verses that use the root about speech of men, idols, and birds (?) The word seems to be referring to rational speech. Idols are unable to express a *mantiq*, men and birds are able.

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Familiar Islamic concepts judged by the Quran

Ilhaam in the meaning of inspiration, *Kashf* meaning vision, and *ruya* as a true inspired dream are terms often found in Islamic literature, referring to different kinds of Experiences, especially among the Sufis, need to be judged according to the dictionary of the Quran.

alhama (inspired) is found at one place in the Quran 91:8 God inspired to the soul its evil and its rigteousness where it may be understood as inspiring moral categories—or taken in the sense: that through revelation God has made it

clear what brings about evil or good for a human being.

Kashf is only found in the Quran in its literal meaning : to remove the veil, esp. from what is evil—or removing evils from man.

Ru'ya is used in 5 verses :

(1) Pharaos vision of cows, meagre and fat, and about ears of corn (Sura Yousuf 12).

(2) Muhammad's vision of his ascent to heaven (Sura Isra 17)

(3) Abraham's vision of the slaughtering of his first son (Saaffaat 18)

(4) Muhammad's vision of his Umra of Mecca (Fath 48)

(5) Joseph's dream of the moon, sun and 11 stars (Sura Yousuf 12)

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The medium of revelation

According to the Quran it is the Spirit or the Archangel Gabriel that is bringing down revelation on man. In orthodox theology Gabriel is bringing the prophetic revelation, but in the Quran he also appears in human form to Mary (Sura Maryam 19). 58 : 22 to believers. The name Gabriel (Jibril) is only used in two contexts :

2 : 97-98 : about Gabriel bringing down revelation on the heart of the Prophet.

66 : 4 : about Gabriel bringing the Prophet information of the murmerings of two of his wives, which called forth the temporary separation from them.

A more frequent term for Gabriel is *al Ruh* or *Ruh al Qudus* (the Holy Spirit) or *Ruh al Amin* (the Faithful Spirit). There are 7 verses which mention Gabriel under that appelation, whereas *Ruh* at least in 20 verses are more intelligible as revelation as such. But there is not necessarily any real distinction between the Angel of revelation and revelation itself. These are mysteries not easily expressed in human language, which is the real medium of Divine revelation. Only those who know by actual expetience may be able to grasp this point.

Is there any conflict between the Quranic and Biblical concepts of revelation ?

Wajehi Dawar-adonai al-Jirmjahu : and the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah—it is said in Jeremiah Ch. 1, v. 4—and in the same way the expression runs when the Divine word is vouchsafed to any other Hebrew prophet, Ha-Dawar : the word is used as far as we can grasp it—in exactly the same connotation as in the Quran.

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Dawar means—according to Genenius' Hebrew Lexicon : word, act, action history, fact, case.

In the same way *Ruah* is used as : breath, wind, corner of world, vital principale, soul, spirit of God. The same meanings could be attributed to the Quranic word : *Ruh*-maybe with the exception of the meaning : soul. This is generally regarded to be an after—Quranic understanding of *Ruh*. But some commentators have inclined to believe that this is the meaning in the verse 17 : 85 : 'They ask thee concerning the *Ruh*. Say it is on the command of Lord.' But looking into the context we rather prefer the rendering, revelation.

In Psalms 33 : 6 we have a mention of the creative word, which may without reservation be paralleled with 18 : 109 and 31 : 27 in the Quran.

It is also enlightening to call in mind that Ruah is used for something perishable in Psalms 135 : 17.

The Septuaginta translated the Hebrew word with Logos all along. And if we look up the word for instance in Grimm's New Testament Dictionary, we find that its meanings in the N.T. are paragraphed up in the following divisions : spoken word, saying, (dictum), decree of God, God's precepts, promise revelation of God to prophets, judgment, speaking faculty, recitation teaching, case, matter, fact.

I need only ask my revered audience to remember whatever I have said about the meanings of Word in th Quran.

But of course it would be obscuring the real issue if I forgot to mention that Grimm's Dictionary adds that in a few places in the Johannean scriptures the word Logos is used in the sense of "The substantial word of God the hypostatic Will and Knowledge of God—in the person of Jesus Christ."

It seems to me that we are here with a possible dividing line: Word as incarnation of God on one side—Word as God's word bestowed by the Spirit to the heart of man on the other. Whether that should be a dividing line or not—that is not my business today. I do not venture to build any theology on a few scriptural evidences—I prefer to stick to great mass of evidence from both scriptures which are in complete consonance with each other. I may be wrong. But it will be difficult to prove my being wrong.

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Three categories of revelation

In 42 : 51 we find a classification of revelation into three categories. We qoute here and in the following from Arberry's translation, because it is a good translation, though we cannot say that we agree with it in all matters.

> "It belongs not to any mortal that God should speak to him except by revelation, or from behind a veil or that He should send a Messenger and He reveals whatsoever He will, by His leave, surely He is All-high, All-wise."

The question to be answered is: what do these categories cover? Let us look up into the Taiseer Jalalain:

Wahyan (by revelation) here means: while sleeping or by inspiration. Miw-Wara'i hidjab means: that he does't see Him, but hears His words, as it happened to Moses—peace be upen him.

Yursila rasulan means: He sends an angel as for instance Gabriel, and the Angel reveals to the one sent to, i.e. the Angel speaks to him by the leave of Allah.

As a comparison we will consult the modern Egyptian

Commentary of ibn al-Khateeb to the above verse : (it can be characterized as modernistic in someways but all the same very traditional).

> *Wahyan* : inspiration or vision in sleep, because this is *wahy.....min wara'i hidjab* : like the speaking to Moses peace be upon him, hearing without seeing, and by the veiling is meant the veiling of him who hears, not the one who is speaking. Allah is exalted above being veiled by a veil or that some cover should hide Him *Yursila rasulan* : the Messenger i.e. Gabriel, because he is the messenger of Allah to His prophets, and there is no evidence that by messenger is meant a mortal messenger, because mortal messengers do not reveal, but they are revealed to.

The Rabwah Commentary says :

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(1) God speaks direct to a person without the aid of an intermediary.

(2) He makes him see a vision which may or may not be interpretable, or sometimes makes him hear words in a state of wakefulness, when he is not seeing the person who is speaking to him.....

(3) God sends down a messenger - an angel who delivers the Divine message to him.

Quranic and Biblical Criteria of true revelation

I have tried here to compile the Quranic verses containing criteria of true as against false revelation. As far as possible I have sought Biblical parallels where they could be found. I have not enumerated these critteria in any order of value. Indeed it might be more reasonable to take them in quite another order :

> 'He discloses not His Unseen to anyone, save only to a Messenger as He is well-pleased with, then He dispatches before him and behind him watchers, that He

may know that they have delivered the messages of their Lord. (72 : 26).

Here 2 criteria are combined :

(1) God does not give a full measure of knowledge of the future except to messengers or prophets (*wala yuzhira 'ala-ghaibihi*).

(2) He guards the revelation so that it reaches its destination in intact from.

Dan. 2 : 19 : Then secrets were revealed to Daniel.

1. Corinthians 14 : 2 : He speaks secrets in the Spirit.

Psalms 91 : 11 Angels protect you on all your ways.

Had he invented against us any sayings, We Whould have seized him by the right hand, then We would surely have cut his life-vein and not one of you could have defended him. (69 : 44)

Deuteronomy 18 : 20 : But the Prophet which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak even that Prophet shall die.

Suely those who oppose God and His Messenger, those are among the most abject. God has written : I shall assuredly be the victor, I and My Messengers. (58 : 21)

Matth. 21 : 44 Any man who falls on this stone will be dashed to pieces, and if it falls on a man he will be crashed by it.

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I abode among you a lifetime before this - will you not not understand (10 : 16).

John 8 : 46 : Which of you convicts me of sin ?

They are honoured servants that outstrip Him not in speech, and perform as He commands (21 : 27).

Deut 18 : 18 ; I will put My wordsin his mouth, and he

shall tell them all that I command him.

You have had a good example in God's Messenger for whosoever hopes for God and the Last Day and remembers God often. (33 : 21)

Matth. 16 : 24 If any one wishes to be a follower of mine he must leave self behind, he must take up his cross and come with me.

And surely it is a Book Sublime, falsehood comes not to it from before it nor from behind it ; a sending down from One All-wise, All-laudable. (41 : 42)

Psalms 119 : 89 : Your Word will remain for ever.

A Messenger from God, reciting pages purified, therein true books. (98 : 2—3)

This is partly a reiteration of the foregoing criterion, but partly also a new criterion ; the true books contained in Muhammad's revelation is a confirmation of the earlier revelation. May be the translation : in it are lasting commandments-would better express this meaning.

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Who believe in what has been sent down to thee, and what has been sent down before thee. (2 : 3)

This verse serves to clarify the preceding criterion : for a believer it is a must to believe in all revelation. This very fundamental claim to true belief in all true revelation, which is therefore also a criterion of true revelation is that it precedes from the Same Source : this is expressly stated in a very important verse :

Those who disbelieve in God and His Messenger and desire to make division between God and His Messengers, and say : We believe in part and disbelieve in part—desiring to take between this and that a way—they are

in truth the unbelievers. (4 : 149 - 50)

> And We never sent a Messenger before thee except that We revealed to him, saying : There is no God but I, so serve Me. (21 : 25)

This is a fundamental criterion. Every prophet must preach the absolute Unity of God. And this is exactly what Jesus proclaimed :

> Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. That is the greatest commandment. (Matth. 22 : 37)

Some further criteria of true revelation

After Moses his blessings and excellences were inherited by a long succession of Israelite prophets and holy and learned men. To this the Quran points in the following verse :

> Surely We sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light :
>
> thereby the Prophets who had surrendered themselves gave judgement for those of Jewry, as did the masters and the rabbis, following such portion of God's Book as they were given to keep and were witnesses to. (5 : 44)

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That the same criterion of spiritual succession was valid after Jesus, the N.T. bears ample evidence to in the spiritual life of the community. At many places the Quran also affirms that the same will be the case with the community initiated by Muhammad, (Peace be upon him) for instance.

> God has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely make you successors in the land, even as He made those who were before them seccessors, and that He will surely establish their religion for them, and will give them, in exchange,

after their fear security. They shall serve Me, not associating with Me anything. Whoso disbelieves after that those—they are the ungodly. (24 : 55)

Out of a great mass of evidence found in the Quran to establish the spiritual succession of the Seal of Prophets we will chose only two more quotations and let the issue rest there—for every one to ponder over the practice of God wherein we find no change:

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Whosoever obeys God and the Messenger—they are with those whom God has blessed, Prophets, just men, martyrs, the righteous. Good companions they. That is the bounty from God. God suffices as One who knows.

(4 : 69)

Surely, God's friends—no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow. Those who believe and are God-fearing—for them is good tidings in the present life and in the world to come. There is no changing the words of God : that is the mighty triumph. (10 : 62-63)

There is no changing the words of God.

Attributes of God – As proofs of God*

ABDUL MALIK KHAN

— III —

God Speaks

Another proof of God—and a great proof—is God's speech, His way of communicating to men. God speaks. More than hundred thousand prophets He sent into the world. To them He spoke and the prophets communicated His speech to those around them. If such a thing does really take place how can we deny there is a Being above man, Who speaks to man. If it can be shown that a given communication is not the work of a human, the conclusion follows that it is the work of God and that God exists. God's speech is God's proof. Speech implies a speaker. The Quran describes itself as Kalam Allah (God's speech). Not in one place, but in many places is this claim of the Quran to be found. For instance :

يسمع كلام الله

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".....that he may hear Allah's speech" (9 : 6).

The Holy Quran is God's speech. Proof of it is laid down thus :

قل لئن اجتمعت الانس والجن على ان ياتوا بمثل هذا القرآن

لا ياتون بمثله ولوكان بعضهم لبعض ظهيرا

'Say, 'If men and jinn should join together to produce the like of this Quran, they will not produce the like thereof even though they should come to one another's help' (17 : 89).

This formidable challenge of the Quran remains unanswered to

*Speech delivered at the 1976 Annual General Gathering of Ahmadiyya Movement at Rabwah.

(Continued from Dec., issue of the Review of Religions).

this day, and this is a fact of history.

Let me remind you. In our world of every day experience we meet with two kinds of things ; which men can imitate or make and things which men cannot imitate or make. A mean plant, or a flower like the rose, man cannot make. It is inimitable, irreproducible. Its inimitability proves that its maker is unique without an equal. It is God, not man. True it is,

Men may not make anything
Not even a worms foot.
Tis a far-cry making anything like the Quran
The holy speech of God has no equal
Tis like a pearl from Oman
Or a ruby from Badakhshan.

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Islam does not think of divine attributes as though any of those could cease or suspend itself for all times or even for a long time. The attributes are always at work, according to need or occasion. Failure is out of question, so is fault of any kind. God must continue to speak to man as in the past. Should He cease to speak, we cease to have any reason to think that He even hears. For God's hearing the only certain proof is that He speaks back. However, the Islamic Shariyah-the Law of Islam-has been made perfect and awarded divine protection from interference by time or man. No law-giving now, any more. The law of Islam is final, given once for all. But human being are human. They are moved to address their Maker and aspire to hear back from Him. We have a verse of the Holy Quran which encourages us to think so and to expect this;

ان الذين قالوا ربنا الله ثم استقاموا تتنزل عليهم الملئكة
الا تخافو ولاتحزنوا وابشروا بالجنة التى كنتم توعدون - نحن
اوليؤكم فى الحيوة الدنيا وفى الاخرة ولكم فيها ما تشتهى
انفسكم ولكم فيها ما تدعون -

'Those who say 'Our Lord is Allah' and then remain

steadfast, on them angels descend saying, 'Fear not' nor grieve, but rejoice in the hope of the Promised Garden. We are your friends in this life and in the Hereafter. Therein you will have all that your souls desire and therein you will have all that you will ask for.....,' (41 : 31-32).

In another place the Holy Quran says :-

لهم البشرى فى الحيوة الدنيا و فى الاخرة

'For them are God's promises and assurances to sustain them, in life Here and life Hereafter' (10 : 65).

The Arabic in the verse is *Bushra* (literally glad tidings translated here as God's promises and assurances). It means God's assurances to believers continue. The door is not closed. We have exactly this idea taught us in the Hadith which says,

'Nothing remains of the institution of prophethood except assurances to believers.'

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It means *Nabuwat* (the institution of prophethood, the coming of revealed teachers) has two ends in view : *Shariyah* (Law) and *Bushra* (Assurances). The *Nabuwat* of *Shariyah* is over but the *Nabuwat* of Assurances—of promises, prophecies, answers to our prayers—continues in the Umma, the community founded by the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet's career as Prophet illustrates it. First six months he received only assurances, promises, etc. Then, the Revelation which became the Law of Islam. This went on for 22 years and 6 months. This earlier kind of revelation continues. No wonder it is described as 1/40th part of *Nabuwat*.

The Holy Quran and the *Hadith*, therefore, endorse the thought contained in the Promised Messiah's verse ;

Blesses He still with His Voice,
Whomsoever He chooses ;
Speaks He still to

Whomsoever He loves.

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God the Almighty

Another attribute of God is that He is the Lord of Might. the Arabic is *Aziz*. This attribute also provides proof of God. Says God in the Holy Quran,-

كتب الله لاغلبن انا و رسلى ان الله قوى عزيز

> 'God has laid down the law-'Assuredly I shall prevail, I and My Messengers! Surely God is All-strong, All-mighty.' (58 : 22).

God and His Messengers are decreed to prevail. Pretenders are decreed to lose, to fail. For His true Prophets, God shows mighty signs. Those who resist God's decree or are hostile to His Messengers, are vanquished. They earn the displeasure of God. A prophet's success follows from his station as a messenger. Earthly rulers take care of their envoys. Why not God? Especially when He has himself laid down the law that He and His Messengers must succeed. He cannot brook their failure; therefore, however hostile the circumstances in which they are placed, however fierce the opposition and enmity, the law of God cannot alter. Time after time has history borne witness to it. In our time the Promised Messiah (peace on him) prevailed over all opposition in accordance with God's eternal promise (in 58 : 22). A grand example is what transpired at the Great Conference of Religions held in Lahore in 1896. There were five questions which had been framed for the votary of any religion to answer from the point of view of his respective religion. The Messiah wrote his answer from the point of view of Islam. In the course of the writing he had an experience of divine assurance. A light from heaven seemed to shoot out and spread in all directions, some of it falling on his own hands. He also had a revelation psomising grand success of his Essay for the Conference. He issued a notice proclaiming all this on the eve of the Conference. Papers on behalf of other religions had been read. When time came for his paper

to be read, poeple assembled in a record number. They began to listen with rapt attention. Their interest increased as the reading proceeded. The reading was not over, but scheduled time was over. The Conference had to be extended at the unanimous request of the audience. Subsequently, the public and the press openly expressed the view that his paper had proved to be the best. Islam triumphed over other religions. A notice promising this had been issued beforehand. God the Al-Mighty, God the Aziz was at work. The manifestation of the divine attribute proved that God exists. His was the glory

When a firm promise is proclaimed by Him,
It fails not to fulfil.
Such is God, such is God indeed.

Arabic lexicons point out that the full meaning of *Aziz* includes defeat of all resistance, all opposition. That is what success of prophets entails. Their opponents rise to undo them and their missions, but the result is they themselves are undone. The God of Might works in subtle ways. One such way—a consequence of the opposition itself—is the expanding publicity which a prophet's message achieves. Opposition stimulates people to think and to expose themselves to the prophet's influence. Opponents aim at the prophot's defeat, but the effort recoils at the opponents themselves. Those who whould think justly and rightly begin to listen. Opposition converts itself gradually into acceptance.

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It was the opposition at Mecca which led to the first migration. This was to Habsha, the modern Abyssinia or Ethiopia. Islam become known in a nieghbouring country. The same way Islam reached Medina, and it reached the tribes settled here and there. Opposition thus turns out to be an instrument for the spread of truth, the same which strikes as evil and error at first. The God of Might works this way. Opposition to a prophet carries the seed of victory for the prophets. History is witness. Not a prophet who had not had not had to face opposition to undo whose mission, the worst efforts are not made. Despite

all this, victory eventually comes to the prophet and his followers. God's promise of victory to His Prophets has always come true. This is al-Aziz, the God of Might.

Victory of prophets in fulfilment of divine promise and in face of the serverest opposition is proof that God exists.

God, the Protector.

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One attribute of God, according to the Holy Quran is al-Hafeez. It means that where God is the Protector, no harm can come, however powerful the attack. Living proof—ever-living proof—is the Holy Quran itself, divine protection of which is promised by God in this verse:

انا نحن نزلنا الذكر وانا له لحافظون

'We, verily We, revealed this Reminder and verily We are its Protector'. (15: 10)

Human hand will not be able to corrupt it in any way. The fact is universally accepted that the text of the Holy Quran is precisely as the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) gave to the world. Every word in it, and every vowel-point, is as the Holy Prophet gave it. It has continued intact through the centuries. Books of other religions were also from God but as they were meant for a given time or a given people, God made no promise of protection for them for all time. Left without divine protection, they suffered interference at human hands. But the Quran, God's Speech *par excellence*, from end to end, was attended by God's own promise of protection. Here is a great and an unparalleled miracle. Books of the world—all books—may be consigned to fire and destroyed. You will find it hard to write and reproduce them over again. But the text of the Holy Quran is safe in the memory of millions of men. They could sit down and reproduce this Holy Text out of their memory. Enemies of Islam admit this miracle of Islam.

There is another manifestation of God the Protector. The Holy Prophet (On whom be peace and the blessings of God) was over-whelmed by opposition on all sides, when he announced

that he had been sent by God and having been sent by God, he also had been provided protection of person. Thus :-

والله يعصمك من الناس

'And Allah protects you—your person-against attempts to kill by the enemy' (5 : 68)

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The enemy will fail in doing any harm to you. They will not be able to kill you. The point is of great importance. It attracted the attention of the Promised Messiah. No wonder he wrote in his book *Chashma-i-Maarifat* (P. 252) :

"We know from history that five occasions proved very hard for the Prophet of God. On these, safety of person seemed impossible. Nay, death on any one of those occasions was certain, were he—our honoured chief-not a true Prophet of God. One occasion was when the Quraish unbelievers had surrounded his house, having vowed to kill and kill him that very day. Second occasion was when a crowd of unbelievers had reached the opening of the cave inside which he had taken refuge, with his only companion Abu Bakr. Third occasion was that most critical one in the Battle of Ohud, when he had been left alone, enemy swords on all sides attacking his person. No attack succeeded in killing. It was a miracle. Fourth occasion was when a Jewish woman hosting a meal mixed poison with the meat served to him. It was a deadly poison and in large quantity. Fifth occasion was when the Iranian Emperor Cjosroes Parvez decided to put an end to his life and had sent armed men to arrest him".

To have survived through all these occasinos of certain death proves that he was in the protection of the Divine 'Protector al-Hafeez, Who worked on all these occasions and saved him.

Our own time has witnessed this miracle, this manifestation of God, the Protector. The Holy Prophet's spiritual son,

the Messiah (on whom be peace) received the revelation (Tazkirah). The Messiah was promised protection of person. There were attempts to kill but they came to nothing.

God, the Healer.

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There is general belief that if the cause of an amilment is diognosed correctly, and a competent physician is available to begin the appropriate treatment in time, then we should certainly expect a cure. Health and disease are believed to be taken care of by natural laws. But the experience we owe to prophets proves that ultimately health and disease are in the hands of God—God, the Healer. True, there are curative powers endowed on things. Physicians put these powers and properties to use in the treatment of their patients. But a physician owes his mind and skill to God. So it is God, the Healer, Who is at work all the time. But some people will not believe this. The experiences of prophets should dispel all doubts on this point. Healing ultimately is in the hands of God. Prophets provide the proofs in this regard also. God is the Healer. The healing miracles prove that He exists and His special interventions prove that He is the Healer.

There are examples. A battle was on and Hazrat Ali developed sore-eyes. The Holy Prophet applied saliva secreted by his mouth and Ali was cured. Similarly, Hazrat Abu Bakr in the cave Thor with the Holy Prophet was bitten by a scorpion. Again, the Holy Prophet applied his saliva and the bite went off without ill-effects. Now saliva is not the treatment for either sore-eyes or a scorpion-bite, but as an exceptional manifestation of His attribute of the Great Healer, God endowed the Holy Prophet's saliva with the power to cure.

There is an example belonging to our own time. The science of medicine teaches that a person who develops symptoms of hydrophobia and having got well once, develops the symptoms again has no chance to recover. Medicine offers nothing for him. But to prove He is the Healer, God in our time

granted recovery to such a patient, the result of a prayer by the Promised Messiah. The case is well-known of one young Abdul Karim who lived as a student in Qadian. He became bitten by a rabid dog and developed hydrophobia. He was sent to the Government Institute at Kasauli set up for the treatment of such patients. He became well and returned to Qadian. But after a time developed the symptoms again. Contact was established with Kasauli and advice sought for his treatment. But came the reply :

'Sorry, nothing can be done for Abdul Karim'.

The Promised Messiah was moved to pray for this unfortunate victim of hydrophobia, whom doctors had declared hopeless. He also applied some medicine of his own. The Great Healer heard the prayer, Abdul Karim was well again. He lived for over 30 years thereafter.

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The Promised Messiah demonstrated the existence of God, the Healer, by another method. He invited doctors - ordinary doctors as well as those called spiritual healers to choose a number of patients declared difficult to treat. Then to draw lots and aliot some patients to him and some to others both to try and work for their health through prayer. For whose prayers did God the Healer show more concern ? Nobody came forward to try and meet the challenge. It only proved that God exists and that among His other attributes, there is the attribute of healer. He is the Great Healer.

God, the Sustainer

One great attribute of God mentioned in the Holy Quran is that of Sustainer. God creates, sustains and feeds His creatures. Thus :

وما من دابة فی الارض الا علی‌الله رزقها

'No creature moves on the earth, but has Allah provided it with sustenance.' (11 : 7)

It is for Allah to feed all living creatures.

We also have

الله يرزقها و ايا كم

'Allah provides for every bird and animal as well for you' (29 : 61).

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Abraham is made to say :

ان الذين تعبدون من دون الله لايملكون لكم رزقاً فابتغوا ـ

عندالله الرزق واعبدوه و شكروا له

'Those whom you worship beside Allah have no power to provide sustenance for you. Seek sustenance from Allah, therefore, and worship Him and be grateful to Him' (29 ; 18).

The Universal Sustainer is God. The most convincing and ever to remember example is pointed out in this verse. It is the example of Abraham. When Abraham counselled the people to seek their daily food from God, for He is the Universal Feeder, his counsel was backed up by his practical example. The occasion was God's command, 'Abraham, go and settle your son Ishmael and his mother Hagar in the yonder wilderness' (pointing to the Hedjaz). Abrahham did not stop to think how it could work out. About food and drink, and about the going itself? No, he did not think of these things. He just went. In a valley, arid, ungreen, this mother and son were to live relying on the God, the Universal Sustainer. God, who sustained them at home will sustain them in this forlorn valley without water or green. As he left them, Abraham prayed :

و ارزقهم من الثمرات

'And feed them and sustain them with all manner of fruits. (14 : 38)

This was asking for more than bare sustenance. The prayer was prophetic, besides being a grand example of faith

in God, the Sustainer. It contained a hint that the valley of Hedjaz, a wilderness then was to become a great place of pilgrimage, so that people from all parts of the earth will one day flock to it, and their flocking will result in the provision of fruits from distant lands in this lonely valley. The story of Abraham and his progeny who became settled in the wilderness of Hedjaz shows how God, the Universal Sustainer does His work. It proves He really does exist.

Then think of other creatures and their infinite variety, the herbivores, the carnivores, others. When and how do they find their living? You have to admit the universal sustainer is God. Think also of the molluscs, the worms, and all the tiny creatures who crawl about, whose names and ways it is impossible for us to know and narrate. How do they eat and live? And yet they do. It is staggering to think.

Science has advanced beyond measure. But it has got to investigate and tell us how all the living creatures obtain their living. We know the broad facts. We dig, we sow and we reap. The grain we separate and use for food. Then chaff is used by animals. Nothing is wasted, but think of the many worlds of animals which live in the sea, some near the surface, some deep down. How do they eat and sustain themselves? Or, of those which live in the caves and the hollows of hills. How do they eat and live? Or, of those creatures which live on tree-tops. Where and how do they eat? Or, of those which live suspended in air. How do they? Or, of the creatures you can see under the microscope in every single drop of blood. How do they? Who is the Universal Sustainer, the Provider, who cares for these worlds of tiny living creatures? The answer is God.

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God the One

Until now, I have been citing examples of divine attributes which require human creatures for their manifestation. They are related to others - men animals and so on. They

may be called relative attributes. Now, in conclusion, I want to cite an attribute which is intrinsic to God. What I whish to say something about is the attribute of Oneness, the Uniqueness, the Unshared Character of God. This attribute is described with appropriate accent in one of the very last short chapters of the Holy Quran, the *Sura Ikhlas* :

قل هوالله احد ـ الله الصمد ـ لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له

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'Say, He is Allah, the One Dependent on none, others depend on Him. Neither begetter, nor begotten, nor does He have any one like Him.' (Chapter 112).

Muslim are remineded and asked to proclaim that God exists—very much so—and that He is One. The ground of His Oneness is that He is *al-Samad* completely and perfectly independent in the sense that everything depends on Him, but He depends on no one. He is the One, Who helps achieve our aspirations, Who provides for the needs of all.

Now, if we can show that all things depend on God, we will have shown *ipso facto* that the Most Perfect Being is God, Who depends on no one.

The soundness of this emerges as soon as we take a deep look at the world as a whole. We can see at once that there is nothing in the world which is complete, perfect, and self-subsistent. Everything requires other things for its existence. It cannot survive without these other things. Every single particle in the world keeps influncing every other single particle. Man is said to be perfect, a perfect organism, apparently self-subsisting. But no. Man needs food and drink and air and an endless number of other things. And needs them all the time. The largest bodies, if you break them down to the smallest bits, are found to be dependent, utterly dependent on other things. These facts, hard to ignore, show convincingly that this world is maintained in existence by some

other Being. It is not self-subsistent. The ultimate Being, in the language of the Holy Quran has to be *al-Samad*. What is dependent cannot be self-created, nor capable of surviving for ever.

To go further, matter keeps transforming itself. This is proof that matter is not a perfect substance in itself. What is perfect should be incapable of transforming itself into anything different. In short, everything in this universe of ours is dependent on other things. This given, it follows that nothing is perfect and complete in itself. The Perfect Being is the One God, *al-Samad*, dependent on no one. The Quranic description says God is no begetter ; which means He is everlasting. The Quran also say 'God is not begotten ; which means He is eternal. Now is there any one like unto Him ? This description makes it clear that though some attributes of God have a partial—very partial—resemblance to the attributes of man, yet there is no one like unto Him. No one is His equal, no other God, that is to say.

To sum up the *Sura al Ikhlas* is a proclamation of the Perfect Oneness of God. The Divine Person, according to it, is unique and unpartnered. In His person, in His attributes, in His actions, decrees and determinations. He is perfect in His One-ness : one-ness of person, of attributes, of action and determinatations. This one-ness rules out any partner and at the same time affirms His existence ;

The One, the Unpartnered,
The Ever-living is He.
All and everyone destined to die.
Never to die is He.

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In the end, let me quote a well-known passage from *Kishti Nuh* (Noah's Ark) by the Promised Messiah. It is an epitome of his teaching on God :

'How unfortunate—how very unfortunate—is he who has yet to know he has a God, God with power over

all things. Our paradise is our God. We say so because we have seen Him and have found every kind of beauty in Him. He is a treasure worth losing yourself in quest of, a ruby worth paying for with your life. Ye losers ! Run to to this spring, it will slake your thirst. It's the spring of life, it'll make you truly immortal. What should I do, so you can believe this grand news ? With what drum shall I proclaim in all the streets, this is your God ? Oh, would that you could hear. Would that I knew the potion I should use, so that people will open their ears to hear.'

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